

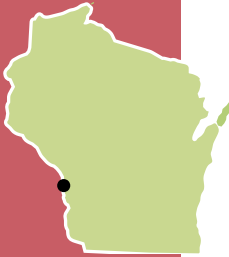


LOWER CHIPPEWA RIVER DELTA WETLAND TYPES

Floodplain forest, shrub carr, marsh, sedge meadow, low prairie, alder thicket, ephemeral pond

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ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

The Lower Chippewa River Delta is the most extensive river delta with the largest contiguous floodplain forest in the Midwest. This Wetland Gem features high quality riverine wetlands along the final miles of Wisconsin's second largest river before its confluence with the Mississippi and includes three State Natural Areas: Lower Chippewa River, Tiffany Bottoms and Nelson-Trevino Bottoms. Within this vast, flat corridor is a maze of floodplain forest, sloughs, oxbow meanders and ephemeral ponds. Adjacent upland areas feature expanses of high quality prairie. This undeveloped river corridor abounds with wildlife of all kinds; many rare bird species as well as tremendous numbers of waterfowl and other migratory birds use these wetlands.

FLORA & FAUNA

Floodplain forest is the key wetland habitat at this site. Dominant canopy trees in the southern portion of the site include silver maple, river birch, green and white ashes, basswood, American elm and cottonwood while the northern portion features swamp white oak, bur oak and black oak. Thickets of willow and red osier dogwood shrubs are found in areas. The ground is characterized by sandy and silty alluvial soils with a layer of herbaceous

plants including wood nettle, partridgeberry, Ontario aster, swamp loosestrife, cut-leaved coneflower, and northern water-horehound. Marshy areas of the floodplain sloughs and oxbows feature river bulrush, prairie cordgrass, bluejoint grass, a variety of sedges, and other emergent aquatic plants.

The remoteness and highly productive nature of this delta system make it a haven for wildlife. Furbearers like mink, otter and beaver as well as many reptiles and amphibians use this site, though the site is best known for its bird life. A wide diversity of bird species thrive in these extensive floodplain forests including numerous rare and uncommon species like red-shouldered hawk, northern harrier, Acadian flycatcher, prothonotary warbler, cerulean warbler, hooded warbler, Kentucky warbler, and yellow-crowned night heron. The site also supports significant concentrations of migratory waterfowl and waterbirds including herons, egrets, and bitterns.

THREATS

Increasing watershed development and operation of dams upstream may impact water quality and habitat quality at this site. Invasive species are also of concern. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.

ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.



Kentucky warbler — Scott Franke

LOWER CHIPPEWA RIVER DELTA

Property Owners: WDNR, USFWS
Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area, WI Bird Conservation Initiative Important Bird Area

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Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
 Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
 Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
 The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)
 Wisconsin Important Bird Areas (WBCI)